



State of New Mexico

Office of the Governor

Bill Richardson
Governor

News Release

Governor Bill Richardson, Attorney General Patricia Madrid Push Nuclear Facility Agreement toward Completion

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SANTA FE- Governor Bill Richardson and Attorney General Patricia Madrid today approved a filing with the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board that urges adoption of an agreement between the State and LES on how the company will manage its wastes.

“This agreement sharply limits the project’s waste storage and disposal. It also allows the state to enforce the agreement, not just the federal government. And it applies significant penalties – such as fines and shutting down the facility – if the agreement is violated,” said Governor Richardson. “It is clearly in the very strong interests of New Mexico’s people and environment.”

“I am pleased that this agreement will move forward,” said Attorney General Madrid. “I think the Governor and I negotiated very strong protections and robust financial assurances.”

The filing agrees that minor technical revisions proposed by the staff at the Nuclear Regulatory Commission would be acceptable to the state. The agreement will be formally revised and resubmitted next week, according to today’s filing.

“These are small changes that improve the state’s ability to enforce the agreement,” said Hilary Tompkins, Counsel to Governor Richardson. “We object strongly to the role played by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission on the way to this agreement, and we think the NRC statutes wrongly allow a state’s concerns to be left out of the licensing process. We have negotiated very strong protections outside that process instead.”

The State has been largely shut out of the license review, but Governor Richardson said, “We will continue to take bold steps to protect New Mexicans’ interests. We will watch

the rest of the licensing process very closely.”

Governor Richardson and Attorney General Madrid urged the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board to adopt the agreement and insert it in the facility’s license as soon as possible.

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